



**OPENING STATEMENT**

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**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman John Katko (R-NY)  
Transportation Security Subcommittee  
House Homeland Security Committee**

*Reform and Improvement: Assessing the Path Forward for the Transportation Security Administration*

Remarks as Prepared

I would like to welcome everyone to today's hearing. I am pleased to have Inspector General Roth and Administrator Neffenger here today as our distinguished witnesses. The purpose of today's hearing is to examine TSA's challenges and identify what changes TSA needs to make to in order to move forward.

TSA was created out of a tragedy, and was quickly stood up to address major security vulnerabilities that terrorists exploited. However, fourteen years after 9/11, we now have an agency that has had many missteps in its efforts to keep the traveling public safe.

Inspector General Roth, your office has conducted over one hundred audits identifying major security vulnerabilities and organizational challenges throughout TSA, including the most recent reports that found that TSA's passenger screening was allegedly wrong 96% of the time, and that seventy-three aviation workers had potential ties to terrorism. These figures are startling and shatter public confidence. I look forward to hearing from you today what systemic problems you have identified and what needs to be done to help TSA address these challenges.

What is most unfortunate is that these startling findings, by both your office and the Government Accountability Office, are not isolated instances; many of these vulnerabilities have been identified and known for years, and unfortunately, prior to this year, the previous leadership within both TSA and DHS did not take steps to address these known security vulnerabilities.

However, the purpose of today's hearing is not to look backwards. With new leadership, Administrator Neffenger, you have an opportunity to address these challenges head on, and lead TSA on a different path. In our discussions, you have been frank, straightforward and sincere. I have full confidence that you are tackling TSA's challenges with an open mind, and I look forward to hearing from you today about how we can work together to ensure TSA fulfills its critical mission.

This subcommittee has worked tirelessly, and in an overwhelmingly bipartisan manner, to address the challenges that TSA faces. Since the start of this congress, we have had seven pieces of legislation pass the House, and two of those bills are now public laws. However, there is no silver bullet to address all

of the challenges that TSA faces, and unfortunately we have to be right 100% of the time and the terrorists only have to be right once.

With nearly two million passengers being screened every day, we need to do more to better focus our efforts on those passengers that are unknown, while still taking precautions to protect against the insider threat.

Currently, less than 5% of travelers participate in PreCheck. TSA needs to increase this population, so that it can target its efforts and resources in a more risk-based manner. That is why I introduced H.R. 2843, the PreCheck Expansion Act; this bill will help TSA to take steps to effectively and robustly market the program, and dramatically increase the enrollment.

However, in addition to expanding PreCheck, TSA must look at what additional efforts are necessary to increase the security effectiveness of PreCheck and what measures are necessary to mitigate the insider threat.

This week, the House passed H.R. 3102, the Airport Access Control Security Improvement Act of 2015. This legislation, which I introduced earlier this year, requires TSA to consult with federal and private sector partners, to review existing employee screening protocols and work comprehensively to improve the effectiveness of access controls at airports across the United States. We must do a better job at knowing more about the people who work and travel through our nation's airports.

Securing our nation's transportation systems is of vital importance to both our national security, and our economic strength and stability. In the 9/11 Commission report, the then head of the CIA, George Tenet, was quoted as saying "the system was blinking red", in the months leading up to 9/11. We cannot stand idly by and grant tacit approval to lax security measures, when we have the authority, responsibility and duty to spur action and keep the traveling public safe from harm. Inspector General Roth and Administrator Neffenger, this committee wants to support both of you in your efforts to reform TSA, and we look forward to hearing from you today.

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